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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000153

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SUBJECT: DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION
LANGUISHING IN THE DRC

Classified By: Poloff KRBel for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups in the DRC remains a significant challenge. CONADER, the Congolese agency responsible for DDR efforts, remains ineffective and mired in inertia. While it has made progress in disarming and demobilizing former combatants, thousands of whom wish to demobilize remain in limbo. The weakest link is reintegration; to date, very little has been done to help ex-combatants return to civilian life. World Bank oversight has been weak, exacerbating CONADER's problems. End summary.

¶2. (C) The National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (CONADER) is the agency charged with administering the formal Congolese DDR program. The World Bank and the MDRP (Multi-Country Disarmament and Reintegration Program) Trust Fund each provided \$100 million to the GDRC to fund the agency. Preliminary figures estimated that approximately 150,000 ex-fighters would need reintegration at a cost of \$1,200 apiece. Although CONADER claims that it has demobilized almost 100,000 ex-combatants since 2003, Post estimates that the number is closer to 90,000, with at least another 30,000 still waiting to be demobilized. Of the demobilized, only a fraction have received reintegration assistance, which constitutes the bulk of the program costs. Nevertheless, CONADER claims that all of its funding has already been spent or obligated to support DDR for those already in the program.

¶3. (C) CONADER was originally set up as a four-year program, but it has been plagued by such mismanagement that the World Bank planned to shut it down at the end of 2006, one full year ahead of schedule. Many observers described CONADER as a "business," and allegations of fraud, graft, and outright theft circle around the organization. The Bank has demanded the removal of five political appointees, reportedly the most corrupt in the organization, at CONADER's senior level. Although the Bank refuses to pay any additional salaries for these appointees, they are technically employed by the GDRC, and the new government will actually have to remove them. While the GDRC could refuse to remove the appointees, and instead offer to pay their salaries itself, such a decision would risk an open break with the Bank.

¶4. (C) The Bank has played its own part in the dysfunction at CONADER as a result of very weak oversight. While the Bank has threatened to pull its funding from CONADER, this has failed to motivate the organization, and there have been no real penalties for CONADER's poor performance. The Bank insisted that CONADER reduce its operation from 400 employees

to fewer than 100 but the operation still has more than 200 employees.

¶5. (SBU) Although thousands of ex-fighters still wish to return to civilian life, CONADER and the World Bank/Trust Fund will no longer assist with DDR for members of non-signatory militias. This means that aside from those combatants already identified, no additional militia members (including Mai Mai and Ituri fighters) will be processed. However, even for those already demobilized, CONADER has done little toward reintegration, which remains the weakest aspect of its program.

¶6. (SBU) CONADER initially provided an immediate payment to each beneficiary of \$110 for urgent needs, plus a monthly stipend and entry/exit "kits" consisting of food, shelter materials, and some livelihood training. Due to management failures, however, many ex-combatants have yet to receive the promised benefits. Many of the "kits" were never purchased and never delivered to claimants. Social reinsertion efforts and livelihood training have been minimal, and have reportedly only reached a fraction of ex-combatants.

¶7. (C) The director of the MDRP told USAID officer on February 1 that it was likely \$30 million in additional funding would be available for follow-on Bank-supported DDR efforts in FY 2007, and that another \$10-\$20 million in donor contributions "are firming up." She also indicated that the Bank is interesting in having the USG join this new mechanism. She was not specific about timing and particularly not on what the Bank would be doing with respect to the future of CONADER as an institution.

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¶8. (C) Comment. The Congolese government must take responsibility for the success of the DDR process -- particularly reintegration -- in order to remove the implicit threat of thousands of armed men with no jobs, no livelihoods, and no options. The World Bank must acknowledge its own fiduciary responsibilities and commit to adequate fiscal oversight. As for CONADER, there are only two choices: rebuilding the organization and addressing key deficiencies, or abandoning it completely and re-starting DDR from scratch. The first will be difficult, but the second is little more than wishful thinking since creating a new program would cause lengthy delays in assistance that neither the ex-combatants nor the GDRC can afford. End comment.
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